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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000092

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [UNMIK](#) [PGOV](#) [YI](#) [EZ](#) [EUN](#)
SUBJECT: KOSOVO/CZECH REPUBLIC - RECOGNITION LIKELY IN
SECOND WAVE

REF: A. STATE 15111

[B](#). STATE 14284
[C](#). STATE 13716
[D](#). PRAGUE 88
[E](#). PRAGUE 83

Classified By: Ambassador Richard Graber for reasons 1/4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) In a February 13 meeting, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek told Ambassador that the Czechs are focused on Kosovo and the government will recognize independence. But he repeated what we have heard at the working level: the Czechs are not likely to be in the first round. Topolanek stressed that while he, Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg and Deputy Prime Minister Vondra are of like mind on Kosovo (supporting independence), others in the cabinet are not, and therefore the issue would need to be handled carefully within the government. He added that, assuming the declaration of independence comes this weekend, it is possible the Czech decision to recognize would come before Topolanek's February 26-27 visit to Washington, but not likely.

[2](#). (C) Comment: The Kosovo recognition decision comes at a sensitive time for the government. The parliament is in the midst of electing a new president, which has severely strained relations among parties, including the three parties in the coalition government. A second election begins February 15, following the inconclusive first election one week earlier; there is no guarantee this election will be more successful than the first. Since there is opposition within the government to Kosovo recognition, Topolanek feels the need to tread carefully. If the cabinet meets next week (not a given) and if there is suitably strong momentum on recognition out of the GAERC meeting at the beginning of the week, we believe an early Czech decision to recognize is possible. More likely, however, is that the Czechs will feel the need to delay their decision and announcement until early March, after Topolanek's return from the U.S.
Graber